

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

The Faculty of Music

SPECIAL EVENTS
1962-1963

In the Concert Hall of
The Edward Johnson Building
at 8:30 p.m.

THE CANADIAN STRING QUARTET



ALBERT PRATZ, *Violin* DAVID MANKOVITZ, *Viola*
BERNARD ROBBINS, *Violin* LASZLO VARGA, *Cello*
with MARY SIMMONS, *Soprano*
and ISAAC MAMOTT, *Cello*

Thursday, October 18, 1962



Thursday, January 17, 1963



Thursday, March 14, 1963

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1962

MOZART

Quartet in F major, Köchel 590 (1790)

Allegro moderato

Andante

Menuetto: Allegretto

Allegro

BARTOK

Second Quartet, Opus 17 (1915-17)

Moderato

Allegro molto capriccioso

Lento

INTERMISSION

BEETHOVEN

Quartet in C sharp minor, Opus 131 (1825-26)

Adagio ma non troppo e molto espressivo

Allegro molto vivace

Allegro moderato, *leading to*

Andante ma non troppo e molto cantabile

Presto

Adagio quasi un poco andante, *leading to*

Allegro

QUARTET (K.590)

Mozart

Of Mozart's twenty-five string quartets, the last group of three are known as the *Prussian* Quartets. Their writing was a direct outcome of Mozart's visit to the Prussian court at Berlin in the early part of 1789. The Prussian monarch, Friedrich Wilhelm II, was an enthusiastic amateur cellist. A few years previously he had given a handsome appointment as court composer to the prolific Boccherini (also a cellist), and his chief resident musician was Jean-Pierre Duport, one of two brothers who were both prominent cello-virtuosi of the day. Mozart met Duport during his stay in Berlin and made devastating fun of his musicianship in letters home to his father. However he apparently received some pointers on cello technique from his colleague. Returning to Vienna, he set about writing this series of quartets, intending to dedicate them to the King. These circumstances account for the frequent prominence of the cello part in these pieces, and for their prevailing brilliance and wit. A third trait—namely, the polished and effortless contrapuntal writing we frequently meet with in these works—is attributable not to the court visit and royal dedication but rather to Mozart's recently-acquired and very intense reverence for the music of J. S. Bach, a repertoire at that time out of vogue and virtually unknown.

This, the last of the *Prussian* Quartets, is larger and more serious in scope than the other two, though its language remains basically *buffo*.

The splendid opening idea, three bars long, has a sharp rhythmic and dynamic profile, and is announced in octaves. It dominates the whole first movement. The

second theme, as in the other quartets of this series, is set out in dialogue between the cello and first violin, though towards its close this texture becomes enriched and the music is extended by an expressive little chromatic phrase. The opening motif reappears as a cadence-theme here. The development begins by elaborating monosyllabically on a new little rhythmic tag, and continues with some high contrapuntal involvement of our opening idea. The monosyllables again assume importance in the coda.

The Adagio speaks from the heart; many commentators have found in it an expression of farewell. As sheer sound, the movement has rarely been equalled in the quartet medium. The very opening chords, with all instruments singing in low register, and the cello on its lowest open string, has an indescribable warmth and sensitivity. The consoling rhythmic contours of the opening theme are present practically throughout—as a background for some heavenly melodic tracery, or overlapping in the momentary tension of double canon.

The principal theme of the Minuet seems to grow from a whimsical turning round one note; the improvisational spirit is also seen in the irregular construction (phrases of seven bars' length) and in the freedom with which the motifs are handled at the expected point of reprise.

The finale presents its main theme in sentences which answer between violin and viola. The continuation has teasing stops and starts, in the Haydn manner, very much exploited in later parts of the movement. Another amusing touch is provided by the violently declaiming gestures of the first violin part, in the midst of a loud busy texture in the "bridge" passage. Mozart ends his quartet-writing career on a note of high comedy.

SECOND QUARTET, OPUS 17

Bartók

String quartet writing held the same central position and personal emphasis in Bartók's work as it had in Beethoven's. Bartók's six quartets, like Beethoven's seventeen, form a particular, intimate and revelatory guide to their composer's creativity in general. The two great formative experiences of Bartók's early maturity are the impressionism of Debussy on the one hand, and, on the other, the rhythmic and modal accents of the Hungarian folk music he had been collecting and studying with Kodály's collaboration. In the opinion of Halsey Stevens (*The Life and Music of Béla Bartók*), the Second Quartet differs from the First (Opus 7) in that it "sublimates the impressionistic elements and brings to the fore the more indigenous ones." "The whole direction of Bartók's later writing," Prof. Stevens considers, "might be deduced" from the Second Quartet. (Though it took some years gaining performances, it was, he notes, the first of Bartók's works ever to be recorded—in 1924—and remains the most frequently played of the composer's six quartets.)

The particular signposts the Quartet provides lie in the tonal freedom of its language, the tragic and expressionistic intensity of its moods, and its unique coordination of the influences of personality and environment. The language is anchored to tonal centres—the Quartet is officially "in A minor"—but its details show audacious departures both from traditional classical practice and from the postromantic idiom of surging semitones we find epitomized in Strauss. The semitone with Bartók is usually a grinding or clashing of two parts rather than the constant interval-step of each separate part. He incorporates also leaps and scale-steps out of the vocabulary of Balkan and Near-Eastern folk musics (which he had found to be closely inter-related)—hollow tritones, which run all through this Quartet, and snake-charming augmented seconds. In mood, the Second Quartet rises from pessimism to wide-eyed whirling-dervish excitement and elation, sub-

siding in an even more desolate pessimism. The finale, the most starkly-phrased of the three movements, is also the most daring in its treatment of dissonance. Matyas Seiber characterizes its mood as one of "utter desolation." One is reminded of the eyes which gaze out from the Bartók photographs—sad, clear, piercingly intense, yet suggesting deep humanity and kindness. That Bartók appears here, perhaps for the first time in a major work, as both an individual artist and (consciously and proudly) a product of his native soil, in itself makes the Second Quartet an important achievement in twentieth-century music. Among his contemporaries, perhaps only Manuel de Falla and (at his best) Ralph Vaughan Williams can compare with him in this. The point of view represented is that individual expression stems from racial (one might almost say geological) memory, and from generations of aural associations of a tribe, nation, or culture. This is an attitude which manifests itself not in the quotation of actual folk melodies and dances but rather in the use of abstracted rhythms and scales and cadence-formulas, bound together in a personal, sophisticated, deeply-thought-out style. One fortunate aspect of Bartók's experience, of course, is that the Hungarian soil happens to be musically an extraordinarily rich one.

The three movements of the Quartet reverse the classical order, in their slow-fast-slow sequence of tempi. The opening movement bears resemblances to the classical sonata-allegro, but the first theme has an "improvisatory" quality quite different from that of classical thematic phrases. Tritones and solid semitones predominate, and curious new scales are heard doubled in grinding Bartókian chords. A cadential theme of modal coloring reveals its folk origins more fully when, on restatement, it assumes a new mandolin-like accompaniment.

The second movement is not so much a dance-rondo as a dance-fantasy or perhaps a condensation of several movements of a dance-suite (the composer's later *Dance Suite* for orchestra comes to mind). Constantly recurring characteristics are the hurdy-gurdy drone, the hypnotic repeated-note patterns and the subtle "parlando-rubato" of the indigenous Balkan dance forms. One vivid passage suggests a quality of alcoholic unevenness in the midst of all the elation—and one recalls that the dance of the village drunkard is a frequently-met-with idiom in this folk repertoire (several samples exist in arrangements and adaptations by Bartók himself). The unison prestissimo passage which ends the movement has astonishing force and is at the same time perfectly geared to the quartet medium.

The brooding finale is built up in snips and blotches—little dialogues, recitatives, muted fragments of what sounds like a hymn-tune. Prof. Stevens observes references to the main motive of the first movement in a cello passage here. The group-glissando, which reappears in so much of Bartók's later string music, makes itself heard. The central motive, a simple gesture of a minor third (or augmented second), is a thread that binds the organism together, finally winding off into limbo at the end.

QUARTET, OPUS 131

Beethoven

In the latter part of 1822, or early 1823, Beethoven received a commission for "one, two, or three new Quartets," from Prince Boris von Galitzin, a nobleman and amateur cellist of St. Petersburg. Beethoven was to name his own price. Receiving the first of the series (Opus 127) a year and a half later, Galitzin wrote the composer: "At the present time there is scarcely one hearer . . . sufficiently enlightened to enjoy the full beauty of this music, but posterity will pay homage to you, and bless your memory more than your contemporaries are able to do." Two more quartets—the A minor (Opus 132) and the B flat (Opus 130)—were

composed in 1825, and sent to the Prince with his name on the dedication-page. Payment for them did not arrive until after Beethoven's death in 1827. The business aspects of the situation could have worried Beethoven little, however, for by this time he had discovered in quartet-writing a perfect medium for the ever more linear and mystical inspirations of those last years. The Quartets in A minor and B flat were worked upon simultaneously—a frequent habit with this composer. Thus the celebrated *alla danza tedesca* movement of Opus 130 was at first conceived (in a different key) as part of Opus 132. Again, the four-note "motto" of the opening movement of Opus 132 receives a distinct echo in the *Grosse Fuge* which originally stood as the finale of Opus 130. Moreover, this "motto" carries over into the work which occupied Beethoven during the winter of 1825–26, the C sharp minor Quartet, Opus 131, so that there is strong reason for viewing Opus 132, Opus 130, and Opus 131 (that being the actual order of their composition) as a trilogy.

Beethoven regarded Opus 131 as his best work in this medium, and it was in his thoughts just shortly before he died. Its form is unique, its content obviously deeply symbolic; and the symbolism seems religious. Beethoven around this time was planning to follow his *Missa Solemnis* with two more settings of the mass ordinary, one of which was to be in the key of C sharp minor; and some authorities believe that the material for this was eventually channelled into the present work.

About Beethoven's personal religion we have many and varied evidences. There is the "Creed" he copied out from an ancient Persian book of meditations and kept framed on his desk. There is the God-in-Nature theme, often revealed in the letters. There is the highly individual interpretation he gives to the liturgical text in the great *Missa*. At the same time, there is much that suggests orthodox Roman Catholicism: Beethoven received extreme unction at the end, and we remember that Mozart, Catholic but Freemason, did not. Modern critics, such as Paul Henry Lang, stress the orthodoxy; however incomplete, this attitude at least helps correct the excesses of those of the Wagner camp who wanted to make their man a pantheist, an oriental mystic, and above all a German saint. Wagner's *Beethoven*, published for the Beethoven centenary of 1870, is virtually unreadable today: almost every page reminds us that 1870 was also the year of the Franco-Prussian War: Beethoven is canonized not as a great composer and a human being of terrific integrity, but rather as a stalwart foe of French frivolity in art. Much of the woolly verbalization which for several generations surrounded the present work stems from Wagner's suggested mystical "program," where Beethoven is seen in one part of the Quartet "addressing himself to his magic work," and in another "burying himself in the deep dream of his soul." The Master of Bayreuth's comment on the first movement used to be frequently quoted: "Nothing more melancholy has ever been expressed in notes." No more limiting use has ever been made of the word melancholy.

This Adagio is a fugue, akin in spirit to some of the vocal-style fugues of Bach. One of the episodes, a canon in high register for the two violins, is directly reminiscent of Bach; and towards the end the subject becomes elongated in the cello part—a Bach-like effect of broadening-out. The admirably expressive contours of the subject give prominence to the semitone and the third—the characteristic intervals of the "motto" theme of the three great quartets. The fugue's unusually long coda serves to emphasize the tonic key before the harmonic flights of the succeeding movements.

The D major Allegro, which unfolds by at first echoing the ending cadence of the fugue a semitone higher, has the typical "late-Beethoven" melodic fluency,

first noted in such works as the opening movement of the Piano Sonata Opus 101. Though its form is that of the traditional sonata-allegro, its course is marked by rare smoothness and continuity rather than by dramatic contrasts.

A declamatory recitative-like transition leads to the Andante, one of Beethoven's greatest variation movements.

It is, to begin with, a remarkable theme—the short soft phrases passing from first to second violin and back, against a texture of sustained viola notes and pizzicato rhythms in the cello. There are two eight-bar phrases, each repeated with varied detail. Thus growth begins even before we get to the first variation: from then on, the course of each variation is organic and developmental rather than statically expressive or merely ornamental. The tentative-sounding dotted-note figure and the short arabesque which together open Variation 1, for example, grow into chains of dotted notes and florid motion in all four instruments. Variation 2, slightly faster in tempo, starts in conversational fashion against a plain tick-tock pattern of chords; again these conversational tags grow into wide-leaping figures and eventually invade all four parts. The strange third variation develops linearly from a curious succession of short broken phrases, for which Beethoven's marking is *lusinghiero* (flattering, coaxing). Variation 4, marked Adagio, blossoms out in phrases of sheer ravishing expressive decoration which pass from instrument to instrument with a contrapuntal freedom and luxuriousness suggesting the existence of four or five additional parts in the ensemble. Variation 5, Allegretto, overlaps sustained chords and short melodic fragments in syncopation. The key to Variation 6, and indeed to what follows, is the repeated direction *semplice*. Throbbing chords, arranged again at first in broken phrases, develop with counter-motifs into seemingly endless phrases of serene melody. A series of solo-flourishes for the four instruments in turn, as if to begin a seventh variation, broadens instead into a fantasia-like coda. Here the original variation-theme returns, accompanied by those ethereal, vibrant trills which seem to culminate so many of the late-Beethoven variation movements. *Semplice* is again the direction for the last chords.

Pure human joy and happiness surround the E major Scherzo, which follows immediately. The trio-section, also in E, has a faintly rustic quality. It occurs twice, being linked to the Scherzo by a playful series of pizzicato notes. The last appearance of the Scherzo contains extra repetitions, as though this mood called desperately to be prolonged. Towards the end, *sul ponticello* notes suggest more sinister thoughts, as if to mock the scherzo theme.

There is an abrupt transition to G sharp minor, the key of the dominant. A short pensive melody in slow time, sustained by sober minor harmonies, serves to introduce the finale.

This is an Allegro of strident, even grim, quality. Its first theme has three segments: an angry main motif expressed in fortissimo octaves, a furiously insistent bit of dance melody, and a motif in long notes which later calls to mind the fugue-subject of the first movement. The second theme supplies a breath-taking, and very brief, moment of heavenly euphony, soaringly sublime. The reprise masterfully adds a rushing upward motion to the first theme. The coda, with dogged insistence, reaffirms the original dominant and tonic harmonies.

Though arranged in a rhapsodic succession, the movements of the Quartet may be viewed as an expansion of the traditional classical form: a slow introduction in the form of a fugue, an Allegro, an Andante with variations, a Scherzo, and a Finale. Far from "bursting classical forms asunder" in these late works, Beethoven seems rather to embrace them anew.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 17, 1963

BEETHOVEN

Quartet in F minor, Opus 95 (1810)

Allegro con brio

Allegretto ma non troppo

Allegro assai vivace ma serio

Larghetto—Allegretto agitato

WEINZWEIG

Third Quartet (1962) (first performance)

Adagio

Allegro appassionato

Adagio

Allegretto, poco scherzando, fervente

Adagio

INTERMISSION

HINDEMITH

Quartet No. 1 in F minor, Opus 10 (1919)

Sehr lebhaft, straff in Rhythmus

Theme with variations: Gemächlich

Finale: Sehr lebhaft

QUARTET, OPUS 95

Beethoven

Among the Beethoven quartets, this work stands as one of the shortest, subtlest, and most compressed. It has also been characterized, justly, as a "transitional" composition, one which Janus-facedly shows traits of both "middle" and "late" periods in Beethoven's writing. There are, of course, dangers in adopting the "three periods, three styles" theory of nineteenth-century Beethoven-commentators. It represents an oversimplification, there being several more successive styles, genres, and strains than that, in Beethoven's output. But if this theory is adopted, with caution, the F minor Quartet certainly shows the transition with clarity. For example, its tone is brusque and confident ("middle"-period traits), but its language is often highly contrapuntal (a "late" one).

The work was composed for personal reasons, independently of any publication series or commission. It bears a dedication to the Freiherr Nikolaus Zmeskall von Domanowecz, a Viennese civil servant and amateur violinist and a devoted friend of the composer. Beethoven's capacity for friendship was vast, but with his bumptious nature it was inevitable that Zmeskall, like the various other steadfast cronies of the Beethoven circle, was made the butt of a lot of rather crude kidding from time to time: he is addressed in Beethoven's letters variously as, for instance, "Baron Mucksplasher" and "Wearer of the Grand Cross of Violoncellity." The letter in which Beethoven sent the Quartet to his friend, however, speaks only of gratitude for long loyalty.

Beethoven once called the Quartet a "quartetto serio." Mendelssohn, a great admirer of it, felt it represented Beethoven in his most typical manner. (The statement reveals also quite a lot about Mendelssohn, because, as D. F. Tovey notes, this is just the sort of chamber-music work Mendelssohn himself would like to have written and could not.) The most typical aspects of the piece—for indeed

there is no question at all who wrote it—are the cryptic, energy-filled motives which form the building-tiles of its structures. Two superb examples are the opening motives of the first and third movements. The remark is often made of Beethoven's ideas that they are commonplace in themselves, but become ennobled through his treatment of them. This is a questionable generalization, especially to anyone who has traced the careful polishing of these very ideas evidenced in the composer's sketch-books. With both motives mentioned here, the rhythmic incisiveness is extremely fine-drawn and judicious. The first-movement motive is also notable for its unusual scalic contour, and that of the third for its harmonic coloring, as of an isolated frame from the middle of some dramatic movie-chase. Beethoven towers over his fellows not just by superior craft but also (as with Bach, or Stravinsky) by superior ideas, superior inspiration.

The terseness of the work is shown at the outset in an allegro whose continuity is headlong and superbly proportioned despite the fact that analysis shows an unusually short development section and a severe curtailing of the main theme in its restatement. It is not in Beethoven's nature to use a conventional or expected number of bars or phrases if fewer will do.

A complex key-contrast is suggested in the choice of D major for the second movement—the sort of contrast Haydn used occasionally. This Allegretto has a main theme of simple and even docile flavor, contrasting with some quasi-“late”-period polyphony. Again the proportions of the two ideas, as they alternate, have a curiously convincing asymmetry. Typifying the stillness of the movement is the way Beethoven uses the tonic chord itself as a quiet suspense-builder for the restatement. The stillness is rudely broken by the scherzo movement, which is marked to follow without a break. D major is again a prominent key of contrast here, being used for one of the appearances of the expressive trio-section. Underlying the seriousness of this movement are the central diminished-seventh harmonies (Beethoven's tools of pathos) and the grimly galloping main rhythms.

The finale is unique in form and somewhat Schubertian in flavor. A brief *larghetto* serves as an introduction, gradually easing into the rhythm of the main portions of the movement. These make out a kind of skeleton rondo, with textural changes at each appearance of its expressive, breathless theme. The last one-third or so of the piece is taken up with a long peroration, starting in this main tempo but accelerating to a faster conclusion expressed in vibrant, confident (major-key), and again notably contrapuntal terms.

THIRD QUARTET

Weinzweig

John Weinzweig's First Quartet dates from his college days; his Second, a brief, amiable piece, written in 1946, has been recorded by the Canadian String Quartet for Columbia. The Third Quartet, composed in 1962, was commissioned by Albert Pratz with a grant from the Canada Council.

Little in the composer's recent music prepares us for the style and scope of the new Quartet; it contains, for him, profound departures in both form and language. Probably for most listeners the only familiar Weinzweig traits will lie in the fourth movement's poking humoristic rhythms. Though reluctant to attach specific names to elements of his writing, Weinzweig calls the Quartet a “surrealistic” work, and connects its creation with the “free association” literary method of James Joyce. The Quartet is, he says, a work of “shifting moods, fantastic images without formal order,” a work of considerable “unrest” and “turmoil,” written as if “from the subconscious.” Technically, the work draws at times on the pointillism of Webern, but its similarities to Austro-German expressionism in general are few.

The five movements are all based on a single note-series (of which the first four notes are constant, the other eight re-arranged after the third movement), and there is much cross-reference between movements. The first, third, and fifth movements are slow in tempo and played with mutes; the second and fourth are faster and played with clear strings. All five movements are notated in compound metres (9/8, 8/8, 7/8, 15/8, etc.)—a deliberate device lending fluidity to the rhythms. All gradations of speed are “built in”; so that, while no improvised *rubati* are called for, the impression is one of rhythmic abstractness, frequent fragmentation of ideas occurs, and cadenza-like passages take their natural place. Only in the fourth movement is there any pronounced symmetry or dance-like feeling of metre.

The Quartet uses an extremely wide range of dynamics: there are constant *subito* effects; the music often involves simultaneous planes of loud and soft sounds. Similarly, the piece is exhaustive in its exploitation of string sonorities, and, though written with abundant craft, it in effect compliments players by its assumption of virtuosio capabilities and disdain of easy solutions.

The first movement is framed by a dialogue between pairs of instruments, low ones vs. high ones at the start, the other way round at the close. An in-tempo cadenza for the cello (who often acts as leader in this Quartet) bridges to a section of accompanied solos in longer phrases, the core of the movement. The mood suggests the pent-up tension of some great questions left for the moment unanswered.

The second movement also has a frame—or perhaps a pair of imposing pillars—implied in the opening, an extraordinary passage consisting of a single chord heard in brutal, hammered repetitions, and the close, a similar single chord heard in a long-sustained *non-vibrato* in the upper three instruments. The angry, dramatic main motives receive fugato treatment and there is considerable splitting-up of their rhythms. A section in slower note-values provides a contrast roughly akin to that of a trio-section in a classical scherzo.

Reminiscences of the first movement are found in the third—especially in a solo line assigned to the cello. (The composer says of all three slow movements that they are active although slow-moving.) A feeling of tenderness or nostalgia is conveyed in an *ostinato* of thirds. The ending disintegrates in floating wisps of sound, a reminder also that measured silences are a strong device of the Quartet as a whole.

The humor of the fourth movement is of a poignant, twisted variety. The main ideas—a staggered-rhythm tune in the second violin, rudely punctuating viola double-stops, and earthy pizzicati from the cello—are sharply defined and off-beat, and the first two particularly emphasize the more grating, close intervals of the series. The movement, like some earlier Weinzwieg music, manages to be always busy despite textural sparseness. The finale which follows is closely related to the first and third movements.

Following an all-Weinzwieg concert presented in 1951, William Krehm, in *Saturday Night*, wrote that he “had no idea that there was anyone of Weinzwieg’s stature writing in Canada.” A decade later, that imposing and unexpected stature reaffirms itself, toweringly, but also in deeply disturbing fashion, in the Third Quartet.

QUARTET No. 1, OPUS 10

Hindemith

Paul Hindemith’s six string quartets span the period from 1919 to 1942. The First Quartet was written when he was twenty-four years old, a graduate of the Frankfurt Hoch Conservatorium, a noted violist, and a composer much under the postromantic influences of Max Reger and Richard Strauss. It thus predates his experimental and functional music of the 1920s, but it unmistakably shows, in a

stage of early brilliance, many trademarks familiar from his later, fluent, neotonal works.

The opening movement's form is that of a classical sonata-allegro, with a fugue standing in the place of the usual central development section. The themes and their treatment have a Reger-like chromatic cast—note for instance the way the dialogue of first violin and cello, near the start, rises in semitone steps. The rhythms of the two main groups of themes are separately characterized at first, but later interact and fuse.

The theme of the second (variation) movement is marked *Gemächlich*, which might be translated “easy-going.” It suggests a latter-day Brahms allegretto, except for the semitone motion found at almost every moment in one part of the texture or another. The variations display remarkable resources of instrumental effect and motivic treatment. There are five of them. The fourth and fifth provide a strong contrast—one to be played with mutes and marked “like music from a far distance,” and the other slow and with a sustained, solemn quality of expression—but the movement ends with a return to the neoBrahmsian thoughts of its opening.

The finale, whose headlong scurrying expression and rhythmic insistence are broken only briefly by some short “quasi recitativo” phrases, gives more hints than the other movements do, of Hindemith's later style: particularly in the fugal and contrapuntal lay-out of so many of the phrases, and in the repetitive and insistent handling of motives.

THURSDAY, MARCH 14, 1963

SCHUBERT

Quintet in C major, Opus 163 (1828)

Allegro ma non troppo

Adagio

Scherzo and Trio: Presto—Andante sostenuto—Presto

Allegretto

assisting artist: Isaac Mamott, cellist

INTERMISSION

SCHOENBERG

Quartet No. 2 in F sharp minor, Opus 10 (1907–08)

Mässig

Sehr rasch

Litanei: Langsam

Entrückung: Sehr langsam

assisting artist: Mary Simmons, soprano

QUINTET, OPUS 163

Schubert

Schubert's C major Quintet is dated in the late summer of 1828, the same period as his great last three sonatas for solo piano. The composer died in November of that same year. According to O. E. Deutsch (*Schubert: A Documentary Biography*), “not even a single private performance of this work in Schubert's lifetime is on record.” It waited twenty-two years for its first performance, and twenty-five for its first publication. As an example of the incredibly slow recognition of Schubert's stature as an instrumental writer, the case of the Quintet is even stranger and more striking than the more famous one of the great C major Symphony. The Quintet may be said to tower among his chamber compositions just as the Symphony does among his orchestral ones.

The work's predecessors are the quintets of Mozart and Boccherini. Mozart's six are all for two violins, two violas, and one cello; of the large number by Boccherini, some double the viola part, others call for two cellos. Schubert's reason for the latter choice of instruments is probably not so much historical as personal and acoustical: he is always the most symphonic-minded of the classical chamber-music composers, the one with the strongest feeling for dark and richly-underlined bass parts (the inclusion of a string bass in a chamber-music work would never have occurred to Mozart or Beethoven; but Schubert has it in both the *Trout* Quintet and the Octet). The two cellos are associated with the ensemble as independent equals; but the work becomes especially memorable at the moments where they join in a combined effect—their superb unison restatements of the main theme in the first movement, their raw and resonant low chords in the scherzo, their romantic duets (as of two tenors) in both first and last movements.

The Quintet's four substantial-sized movements ("like a thick novel in four volumes by Jean Paul," as Schumann said of the C major Symphony) possess, despite their classical allegiance to C major as a tonal centre, an intense dramatic foreboding, suggested in harmonic boldness and restlessness. This quality is shown at the outset in a chromatic progression which becomes like a "motto," underlying many passages of the first movement and hardly ever repeated twice in the same manner. One may also point to the typically Schubertian touch, in the finale, of the theme which seems unable to decide whether it is in minor key or major. Notably, this movement brings the Quintet to a conclusion on a cadence which is a standard classical depressant—involving as it does a flattening of the second degree of the scale. The Quintet's overall tonality may be major, but there are constant inflections implying the opposite of the major's conventional "sunniness."

The opening movement, perhaps because of the fantasia-like transformations of its "motto," gives a terse and compact impression despite its length. The sharp contrasts of expression which mark the Quintet as a whole are first observed here in a beautiful lyrical "second theme," first stated in "Viennese" thirds and sixths by the cellos. Brahms is possibly the only other composer who can match Schubert's ability to use this sentimental Viennese idiom without becoming maudlin.

The Adagio is an extraordinary original and sustained piece of textural invention such as perhaps only a first-class songwriter could achieve. Its form is the simplest and most basic lyric form in classical music: statement, contrast, and return. But its proportions, the length of its melodies, the sustained euphony of its scoring, are altogether remarkable. A sense almost of hearing two different tempi simultaneously is conveyed by the main statement, a long slow line for the inner three parts accompanied by pizzicati and nervous interjections in the outer two. On return, the quick outer parts of this texture are completely varied and transformed thus giving heightened expressiveness to the decoration while leaving the central ideas untouched, on their own serene plane. Contrast is shown here in the turbulent and fantastically busy middle section, whose tonality of F minor (opposing the E major of the movement as a whole) reappears as a brief cloud on the horizon just before the end.

The scherzo is all rustic gaiety and buoyancy, with its hearty, droning accompaniments, "outdoor" suggestions of romantic horn-calls, and high-spirited harmonic touches. But again, as in the other movements, a trio-section provides strong contrast, in a euphonious, tranquil-tempo section suggesting various odd and distantly-related tonal areas, most prominently that of the already-recurrent "flat-two."

Aside from its harmonic flavor, one may observe in the finale the curious "Hungarian-dance" quality of its rhythms; a fresh-sounding subsidiary theme bearing the unmistakable thumbprint of the composer of *Rosamunde*; some brief but striking contrapuntal developments; and the unexpected, grim acceleration of the ending.

SECOND QUARTET, OPUS 10

Schoenberg

There are only four published quartets by Arnold Schoenberg, dating from 1906 to 1936, although there are several others, unpublished or else destroyed, dating from his student days. The Second Quartet, coming close after the First, differs from it in many respects. Where the First Quartet is elaborated in conventional tonal language, the key being D minor, the Second is only nominally in its stated key of F sharp minor. The first movement begins and ends in F sharp, the second begins and ends in D, but the remaining two movements are tonally extremely free. For instance, the opening muted *arpeggi* of the last movement (a foreshadowing, perhaps, of the opening of *Pierrot Lunaire*) are unanalysable in traditional harmonic terms. A bow to convention and general consistency is however conveyed in a final F sharp major cadence.

The Second Quartet in fact marks the beginning of a series of works by Schoenberg in which the bounds of tonality were pushed further and further back: the succession is outlined in the Piano Pieces Opus 11, the Georg Songs Opus 15, the Orchestral Pieces Opus 16, and the radical dramatic works *Erwartung* Opus 17 and *Pierrot Lunaire* Opus 21. Notably, as Schoenberg's atonal and athematic experimentation progressed, he chose smaller forms and more economical media to work in. The Second Quartet already epitomizes this trend, being almost a quarter of an hour shorter than the First.

The work opens with a highly unified Allegro, of dynamic surge and nervous elation. There follows a scherzo, strange and quixotic in its flightiness. Egon Wellesz comments on its traces of "scurrilous humor," and compares these to certain moments in *Pierrot Lunaire*. A distortion of the popular tune *The More We Get Together* (or *Ach, du lieber Augustin* as it is called in German-speaking Europe) is found in the middle section here. Such caprices of quotations are rare in Schoenberg, but examples may be found even in some of the strict twelve-note works, for example the Suite Opus 29.

So far, the Second Quartet, despite its luxuriance of contrapuntal detail, belongs unquestionably in the postromantic era of chromatic harmony, surging themes, and ample textures. But, signifying the bolder reaches of the succeeding two movements, Schoenberg adds a vocal part at this point. The third movement, constructed as an Adagio theme with variations and epilogue, is a setting for soprano and quartet of a semi-mystical poem by Stefan Georg called *Litany*. And the fourth movement, representing at some points the composer's most adventurous departures so far into nontonal regions, employs the voice again, to sing Georg's poem *Transport*. It begins with the line "I breathe the air of other planets," obviously of double significance here. It seems as if Schoenberg, very conscious of where he was heading in these first atonal works, wanted to make the musical situation quite specifically understood—hence the words. A later line of the Georg poem accorded even more closely with his thoughts: "I lose myself in circling, weaving sounds."

Not that Schoenberg ever literally "loses himself," of course. His sense of abstract musical unity is strong, even in the course of unfolding a symbolic work such as this Quartet. For instance, the opening movement has a deliberately shortened development section, so that, as Schoenberg himself said (and follow-

ing a device he used in both the First Quartet and the First *Kammersymphonie*), the third movement could serve this function in more extensive and formally isolated fashion. The main first-movement motive is thus heard at the outset of the variations, and pervades much of their subsequent texture. Similarly, the vocal setting of the two quoted lines of *Transport*, as striking a pair of interval-successions as Schoenberg ever devised, spills over into the string texture—into the cello part at first, but eventually in transfigured state into other parts as well.

There is a surprisingly close affinity between this last movement and some of Debussy's later works. The coloristic, moody, or mystical touch reappears in other Schoenberg pieces of this period, notably the sets of pieces for piano and for orchestra.

As to the Georg poems, their choice accords with Schoenberg's preoccupations at this stage of his career. They are serious statements, emotionally intense, but imprecise in the manner of the French *symbolistes* (Schoenberg had already made a symphonic work out of Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande*); their religious content is atmospheric rather than affirmative; their particular images are obviously ones to which Schoenberg could find musical parallels from his experience (some of the Catholic images recur more surrealistically in the poems he was to set later in *Pierrot Lunaire*). Only in later life, when on the path to a re-acceptance of his forefathers' Jewish faith, did he begin to write his own texts. Georg's German poems are given below (complete with his curious lower-case nouns), along with an English translation by Carleton Sprague Smith.*

LITANEI

Tief is die trauer,
die mich umdüstert
Ein tret ich wieder,
Herr! in dein haus. . .

Lang war die reise,
matt sind die glieder,
Leer sind die schreine,
voll nur die qual.

Durstende zunge
darbt nach dem weine.
Hart war gestritten,
starr ist mein arm.

Gönne die ruhe
schwankenden schritten,
Hungrigem gaume
bröckle dein brot!

Schwach ist mein atem
rufend dem traume,
Hohl sind die hände,
fiebernd der mund

Leih deine kühle,
lösche die brände,
Tilge das hoffen,
sende das licht!

LITANY

Deep is the sadness
which doth enfold me;
Lord, I return now
unto Thy house. . .

Long was the journey,
weary my body,
empty the shrines are,
grief's only full.

Tongue that is thirsting
for the communion.
hard was the struggle,
tired my arm.

May rest be granted
to trembling footsteps,
for hungry palate
break Thou Thy bread.

Weak is my breathing
troubled in dreaming,
my hands are empty,
feverish my mouth.

Lend of Thy coolness,
quench all the fires,
Banish the longing,
O send the light!

*Translations reprinted by permission of Columbia Records of Canada, Ltd.

Gluten im herzen
lodern noch offen,
Innerst im grunde
wacht noch ein schrei. . .

Töte das sehnen,
schliesse die wunde!
Nimm mir die liebe,
gib mir dein glück!

ENTRUECKUNG

Ich fühle luft von anderem planeten.
Mir blassen durch das dunkel die
gesichter
Die freundlich eben noch sich zu mir
drehten

Und bäum und wege die ich liebte
fahlen
Dass ich sie kaum mehr kenne und du
lichter
Geliebter schatten—rufer meiner qualen—

Bist nun erloschen ganz in tiefern gluten
Um nach dem taumel streitenden
getobes
Mit einem frommen schauer anzumuten.

Ich löse mich in tönen, kreisend, webend,
Ungründigen danks und unbenamten
lobes
Dem grossen atem wunschlos mich
ergebend.

Mich überfährt ein ungestümes wehen
Im rausch der weihe wo inbrünstige
schreie
In staub geworfner beterrinnen flehen:

Dann seh ich wie sich duftige nebel
lüpfen
In einer sonnerfüllten klaren freie
Die nur umfängt auf fernsten
bergeschlüpfen.

Der boden schüttet weiss und weich wie
molke . . .
Ich steige über schluchten ungeheuer.
Ich fühle wie ich über letzter wolke

In einem meer kristallinen glanzes
schwimme—
Ich bin ein funke nur vom heiligen feuer
Ich bin ein dröhnen nur der heiligen
stimme.

Heart full of embers
sullenly flaming,
innermost bosom
guarding a cry. . .

Consume the craving,
bind up the bruises,
Free me from passion:
grant me Thy joy.

TRANSPORT

I feel an air from other planets
streaming.
Through darkness, faces which but now
turned toward me
In friendly fashion, ghostly white are
gleaming.

Dear groves and paths their colors do
relinquish
So that I scarcely know them, and thou
glimmer,
Rapturous shadow—summoner of
anguish—

In a more glowing radiance art released
Bringing to me a new most sacred
wonder
After the clamorous frenzied din has
ceased.

Through circling, weaving harmony
comes relief
With thanks unending and praise
beyond compare;
Wishless I pledge myself to the awesome
breath.

A storm sweeps by me carrying all
before;
With fervent cries transfixed by
consecration
Worshipping women, bowed in the dust,
implore:

Then I behold how nebulous mists
can lift
O'er a transparent sun-drenched wide
horizon,
Only remaining by hidden crags to drift.
The earth shakes, quivering white and
soft as whey . . .
I step across celestial, fearful chasms.
Touching the final clouds over which I
sway

In a sea of crystal brilliancy rejoice—
For I am but a spark of the Holy Fire,
Only an utterance of the Holy Voice.